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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

MICHAEL D. BOPP, STAFF DIRECTOR AND CHIEF COUNSEL  
JOYCE A. RECHTSCHAFFEN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR AND COUNSEL

December 14, 2005

Jack Martin  
Chief Financial Officer  
United States Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Mr. Martin:

We are writing in regard to your compliance with the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPIA). As part of our oversight of the effectiveness and efficiency of Federal financial management, our Subcommittee needs to have the best data available so that we know what work on improper payments remains to be done. The ultimate goal is to eliminate improper payments in federal agencies and illustrate impeccable stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

The Department of Education recently reported in the 2005 Performance and Accountability Report that the Title I Program was deemed to be at "very low" risk of making improper payments. With outlays of over \$10 billion annually, it is critical that programs like these receive the appropriate attention and oversight.

In order to work with your agency in ensuring stewardship of taxpayer dollars, we are asking that programs with large outlays (including Title I), yet not meeting the definition of "significant" improper payments, provide our Subcommittee with a summary of the risk assessment process and methodology used to reach this conclusion.

In addition, your 2005 Performance and Accountability Report did not have an improper payment amount or percentage for Student Financial Assistance, but rather a projected improper payment rate of 4.5% as the "outlook" for 2004-2008. In order to work toward full and timely compliance with IPIA, please provide the Subcommittee answers to the following questions:

- 1) What obstacles have prevented your agency from providing estimates of improper payments in fiscal years 2002 through 2005?
- 2) When will you have estimates of improper payments available?

3) What steps are you taking, even in the absence of estimates, to reduce the risk of improper payments at your agency?

Please provide and return the requested information to

Liz Scranton, Chief Clerk  
Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and  
International Security  
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
439 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Please contact Robin Landauer with Senator Coburn's staff at 202.224.2254 or John  
Kilvington with Senator Carper's staff at 202.224.7061 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Tom Coburn  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Federal Financial  
Management, Government Information,  
and International Security



Tom Carper  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Federal Financial  
Management, Government Information,  
and International Security